

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 06203 021118Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----039667 021121Z /14
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4402

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 6203

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CG US
SUBJECT: MOBUTU'S CALL FOR REFORM: RECOMMENDED US REACTION

REF: (A) KINSHASA 6171, (B) KINSHASA 6192

1. I HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S JULY 1 SPEECH, REPORTED REFTELS, AND THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS COULD REPRESENT A DECISIVE TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF ZAIRE. I SAY "LITTLE QUESTION" AND "COULD REPRESENT" BECAUSE ONE ALWAYS HAS TO AWAIT THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF MOBUTU'S PRONOUNCEMENTS. IT IS CONCEIVABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MOBUTU'S ALLUSION TO TRAITOROUS MILITANTS MAY PORTEND A REAL CRACKDOWN -- AND THIS IN THE FACE OF HIS GOOD WORDS ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC CRITICISM. AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE INSTITUTION OF A PRIME MINISTER FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS THE ELECTORAL REFORM, MAY TURN OUT TO BE MOSTLY A FACADE BEHIND WHICH MOBUTU CONTINUES HIS ONE MAN RULE.

2. NEVERTHELESS, THE REFORMS WHICH MOBUTU ANNOUNCED ARE THE VERY ONES WE HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR. THE PRIME MINISTER IDEA, MORE DEMOCRACY AND MORE DECENTRALIZATION ARE THE VERY IDEAS THAT REFORM ELEMENTS INSIDE ZAIRE HAVE BEEN PUSHING, WITH SOME COURAGE, I MIGHT ADD. FOR US TO IGNORE MOBUTU'S STATED INTENTIONS IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE WRONG, AND I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT
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PRESIDENT CARTER SEND A CAREFULLY WORDED CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE, THE AIMS OF WHICH WOULD BE (A) TO ENCOURAGE THE EXECUTION OF STATED INTENTIONS AND (B) TO ASSOCIATE OURSELVES MORE PUBLICLY WITH THE IDEA OF REFORM IN ZAIRE.

3. SUGGESTED MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER FOLLOWS:
QUOTE I HAVE READ REPORTS OF YOUR JULY 1 SPEECH WITH GREAT

INTEREST, AND I HASTEN TO CONGRATULATE YOU FOR THE WISDOM AND COURAGE YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN ANNOUNCING FUNDAMENTAL REFORM. YOU HAVE NEVER LACKED WISDOM OR COURAGE, MR. PRESIDENT, AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO DISPLAY THESE VIRTUES IN YOUR PURSUIT OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR GREAT COUNTRY. MY VERY BEST WISHES TO YOU AND TO THE PEOPLE OF ZAIRE AS TOGETHER YOU UNDERTAKE THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUR HISTORIC DECISIONS. END QUOTE

4. WHILE I REALIZE THIS IS LONG HOLIDAY WEEKEND IN WASHINGTON, TO HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT MESSAGE SHOULD BE DELIVERED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE NEXT WEEK.
CUTLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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